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AUTHOR Amos, Arlene T.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean attitudinal scores of 285 teachers who met proficiency or did not meet proficiency as they entered their postevaluative conference with principals. Proficiency was assessed by principals completing classroom visitations utilizing the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument. A total of 255 teachers met proficiency and 30 did not. In an ex post facto study, the researcher collected data that included information about the environment, the attitudes and behaviors of the principal, the total supervisory rating scale, gender, race, age, level of preparation, and teaching position of the participants. Findings indicated that teachers' assessment by principals prior to their conference greatly affects teachers' conference attitudes and their perceptions of the principal's attitude and behavior. In addition, older teachers, above the age of 54, had a more positive attitude toward the conferences than teachers under 30. This paper concludes that principals need to have postevaluative conferences with teachers in order to minimize the negative attitudes of younger teachers prior to and following such encounters. (JAM)

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DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD POST EVALUATION CONFERENCES FOR PROFICIENT AND NONPROFICIENT TEACHERS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Arlene T. Amos
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
Choctaw County Schools, Mississippi

and

Neil G. Amos
Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Mississippi State University

and

Herbert M. Handley
Distinguished Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
Senior Researcher, Bureau of Educational Research and Evaluation
Mississippi State University

A Research Paper Presented at the 1988 Annual Meeting
of the Mid-South Educational Research Association

Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean attitudinal scores of teachers who met proficiency and teachers who did not meet proficiency toward the post evaluative conference with principals after completion of the classroom visitations utilizing the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments. The literature reviewed provided no evidence that research had been conducted addressing proficiency or nonproficiency as a variable for studying attitudinal scores toward post conferences.

This study involved 285 teachers in Mississippi who had just been evaluated by their principals using the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments for the first time. A total of 255 of these teachers met proficiency and 30 did not meet proficiency.

The investigation was an ex post facto study in which the researcher collected data that included information about the environment, the attitudes and behaviors of the principal, the total supervisory rating scale, gender, race, age, level of preparation and teaching position. Eight questions were investigated. The results are summarized as follows:

Testing of the first three questions using a one way analysis of variance yielded a significant difference at the .01 level for attitudes of those who passed over those who failed the MTAI. The teachers' proficiency on the Mississippi Teacher

Assessment Instruments greatly affected their attitudes toward the environment of the post conference, their perceptions of the principal's attitude and behavior, and their attitudes about the post conference as a whole.

The fourth question investigated the attitudes of teachers by gender. A one way analysis of variance revealed no significant difference.

The fifth question investigated the attitudes of teachers by race. No significant difference was found in the attitudes of teachers as measured by race when a one way analysis of variance was used.

Question six asked if there was a significant difference in the mean attitudinal scores toward the Supervisory Conference conducted by principals for teachers after the completion of the first MTAI evaluation as measured by age. A significant difference at the .05 level was found as related to age for Factor I: Environment, Factor II: Attitudes/Behaviors of Principals and the Total Supervisory Conference Rating. Teachers over the age of 54 had a much more positive attitude toward the post evaluation conference than teachers under 30.

The seventh question investigated resulted in no significant difference in the attitudes of teachers as measured by level of preparation.

The last question investigated showed no significant difference for teachers as measured by teaching position.

Conclusions/Implications

Conclusions

Based on the results obtained from this sample of Mississippi teachers, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Teachers who met proficiency on the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments had significantly higher attitudes toward the environment of the post evaluation conference than teachers who did not meet proficiency.
2. Teachers who met proficiency on the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments had significantly higher attitudes toward the principal's attitudes and behaviors during the post evaluation conference than teachers who did not meet proficiency.
3. Teachers who met proficiency on the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments had significantly higher attitudes toward the total post evaluation conference than did teachers who did not meet proficiency.
4. Teachers over 54 years of age had significantly higher

attitudes toward the environment of the conference than teachers under 30.

5. Teachers over 54 years of age had significantly higher attitudes toward the principals' attitudes and behaviors during the post evaluation conference than teachers under 30.
6. Teachers over 54 years of age had significantly higher attitudes toward the post evaluation conference than teachers under 30.
7. Teachers between the ages of 31 and 54 had about the same attitudes concerning the environment, principal and total post evaluation conference.
8. Gender, race, level of preparation and teaching position were not significant variables in determining attitudes toward the post evaluation conference.

Implications

Several implications can be drawn from the conclusions reached from the data presented in this study. These implications are of value specifically to principals but may provide areas of concern for teacher and administrator preparation and staff development programs.

There is a need for post evaluation training for principals. Principals need to be able to conduct a post evaluation

conference in such a way that both teachers who meet proficiency and those who do not meet proficiency feel that the post evaluation conference is a fair, unbiased means of communication. The principal should be made aware of the fact that the setting or environment of the post evaluation conference relates to the attitude that the teacher has toward the process. The behaviors and attitudes of the principal also reflect upon the way the teacher views the post evaluation conference. Principals should also be especially aware that younger teachers have much more negative attitudes toward post evaluation conferences than older teachers. These teachers will need to be made more comfortable and secure about the post evaluation conference in order to benefit from the process.

Teacher and administrator preparation programs need to include training in conferencing techniques. Administrators would benefit from this because evaluations and conferences are a part of all levels of administration. Teachers would also be able to respond better in post evaluation conferences if they knew what to expect. They would also be able to use this information and training while conferencing with parents about their children's progress at school.

The area of greatest concern would be with the attitudes and behaviors of the principal. Even the teachers who met

proficiency on the MTAI rated their principals' attitudes and behaviors lower than the environment of the conference. How the principal relates the information about the teacher's evaluation may be as important as what the principal says.

Staff development programs for administrators on evaluations and post evaluation conferences need to be provided by the State Department's Executive Management Institute for administrators who are already in the field. Local districts should be responsible for providing staff development for teachers.

All administrators and teachers were provided with some level of staff development on the use of the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instruments prior to their use. Even though no training was provided for the actual post evaluation conference, the training with the instruments could have improved the teacher's attitudes toward the conferences. Anyone who is to be evaluated should have an opportunity to become familiar with the instrument and the evaluation process prior to being evaluated.

Recommendations

1. The possibility that the positive attitudes of the teachers who met proficiency on the Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument could have been the reason that they did meet proficiency was not studied. A study that conducted an

attitudinal survey toward the principal and his/her method of evaluating and responding to teachers prior to the evaluation would give a comparison study of the actual attitudes toward the specific post evaluation conference.

2. Teacher and administrator preparation courses that train both teachers and administrators in evaluation and post evaluation conference procedures are needed.
3. Staff development programs provided by the State Department of Education for all present administrators on evaluation and post evaluation conference procedures would be beneficial.
4. Further studies involving proficiency need to be conducted both at the state and national level.